

NORTH CAROLINA SUSTAINABLE LOCAL FOOD ADVISORY COUNCIL

MINUTES

JULY 22, 2010

The North Carolina Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council held its third meeting from 1:00pm to 4:00pm on July 22, 2010, in the Martin Building, NC State Fairgrounds.

Members in attendance:

Mr. Jamie Ager	Ms. Debbie Hamrick	Mr. Roland McReynolds
Dr. Alice Ammerman	Ms. Linda Harris	Ms. Earline Middleton
Mr. Uli Bennewitz	Dr. Lynn Harvey	Mr. Randall Patterson
Dr. Nancy Creamer	Mr. Charlie Jackson	Mr. Willy Phillips
Ms. Dania Davy	Dr. Ed Jones	Commissioner Steve Troxler
Dr. Jeffrey Engel	Rev. Mac Legerton	Ms. Latisha Watford
Mr. Billy Ray Hall		

Absent members:

Mr. Andrew Branan	Mr. John Day	Mr. Barry Nash
Mr. Ted Burch	Mr. Phil Hudson	Mr. Tommy Porter, Jr.
Commerce Secretary Keith Crisco	Mrs. Mary James	

OPENING COMMENTS

Chairman Commissioner Troxler opened the meeting at 1:00pm by thanking everyone for attending. He also thanked the NC Farm Bureau for providing lunch for members of the Council and NC State University for providing space at the JC Ralston Arboretum for the Subcommittees to meet and have lunch.

Commissioner Troxler welcomed a new Council member, Ms. Laticia Watford.

APPROVE MINUTES OF APRIL 22, 2010

Commissioner Troxler entertained a motion for approval of the minutes. Dr. Jeffrey Engel made a motion to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2010 meeting. Ms. Linda Harris seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Each Subcommittee Chair was given fifteen minutes to report on the activities of their Subcommittees.

Health, Wellness, Hunger and Food Access—Dr. Alice Ammerman

Dr. Ammerman gave a brief report on the work of the Health, Wellness, Hunger and Food Access Subcommittee. She said the Subcommittee had decided to focus on three primary areas: the Farm to School Program, SNAP Education funding, and Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) used at farmers markets.

Action items included the following: to complete a survey to understand the barriers to the success of the Farm to School program; to review Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)

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requirements for the Farm to School program to allow all small farmers to participate; and to increase the use of SNAP Education marketing funds. Available Snap Ed funds have not been fully utilized in North Carolina. California used \$42 per person while North Carolina used \$1 per person.

Mr. Mac Legerton posed a question regarding moving the statewide Farm to School program forward even more via a conference or session which would focus on this issue. Members discussed additional resources and support for this program, as well as limitations to future expansion.

Land, People, and Natural Resources—Dr. Ed Jones

Dr. Jones said the Land, People, and Natural Resources Subcommittee came up with a very extensive and varied list of focus areas. The top three were:

1. Farmland Preservation (number one issue)—includes Voluntary Agricultural District ordinances (VAD) and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)
2. Issues on tracking polices and regulations
3. Farm transition

The Subcommittee plans to break these down more to find focus.

Mr. Roland McReynolds questioned whether the Subcommittee considered the state's present use value system as part of their work. Dr. Jones confirmed that it was and will continue to be considered.

Economic Development and Infrastructure—Debbie Hamrick

Ms. Hamrick said the Economic Development and Infrastructure Subcommittee spent time reviewing the legislation that established the Council to see how to best go about accomplishing the charges of the Council. She said the Subcommittee decided the most effective way to carry these out was by creating four working groups.

1. Regulation—regulatory – infrastructure group met today and had representatives from NCDA&CS Food and Drug Division, DENR's Divisions of Water Quality and Environmental Health to give presentations.
2. Study—Economic study statewide – funding and economic assessment on local foods in North Carolina.
3. Literature—What those who have come before have to say about local food bibliography started that will be published on line.
4. Infrastructure—working group has not met

Subcommittee member Ms. Dania Davey said it was helpful to see the breakdown of the roles of each regulatory agency and how regulatory agencies interact with one another. She said she felt it would have been good for the entire Council to see the program.

Mr. Billy Ray Hall questioned the efforts to get the military to buy North Carolina local food. Commissioner Troxler said this is an area the Department is working on. He said they have met with the Major General on several occasions. There are farmers markets on military bases now and hope to be expanded to institutional food service through the "Feed the Troops" program.

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Mr. Randall Patterson asked if it was possible to perform an economic study on regulations and how they impact agribusiness and farmers, stating having a baseline of this information could bring about more understanding and interest.

PRESENTATIONS ON LOCAL FOOD ISSUES

Commissioner Troxler said North Carolina is 1 of 28 states in the country whose meat and poultry inspections are equal to what a federal inspection would be. He explained the importance of a state-run meat inspection program and introduced Mr. Don Delozier to present a program on animal processing in North Carolina.

Regulatory Issues of Animal Processing in North Carolina—

Donald H. Delozier, Director, NCDA&CS – Meat and Poultry Inspection Division

Mr. Delozier gave a presentation addressing primarily two subjects: North Carolina farmers and producers' ability to provide local meat and poultry to local consumers and an explanation of poultry exemption requirements.

Mr. Delozier explained that a meat handler was anyone receiving, storing, and/or selling meat or poultry products, stating that these products must have an inspection label. He said the main category of growth in meat handlers in North Carolina was individual farmers. Mr. Delozier provided Council members with a map titled *Meat Handlers in North Carolina* (Exhibit 1) which noted the concentration of meat handlers across the state.

Mr. Delozier gave Council members the newly developed publication *Poultry Exemption Requirements* (Exhibit 2) which focused on producers or growers that slaughter no more than 1,000 birds within a calendar year. He reviewed these requirements and the confusion often caused by the 1,000 bird limit.

Much of the Council's discussion related to whether there are economically viable ways to process and slaughter fewer birds or animals than what might be processed or slaughtered in larger plants.

Additionally, Mr. Delozier provided a handout of several pages taken from the Meat and Poultry Inspection Division's website. (Exhibit 3) The website highlights Meat and Poultry's history, definitions and explanations on meat handlers and a list of establishments that slaughter and/or process meat for farmers.

Commissioner Troxler said the Division's mission is to help people provide legal unadulterated safe products.

Conducting a Baseline Assessment for Local Foods and Economic Development Potential in NC: the Western North Carolina Example—

Charlie Jackson, Executive Director, Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project

Mr. Jackson gave a presentation on the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project. (Exhibit 4) He said they started their local food campaign in 1999 for the twenty-three Appalachian counties. He said they researched what was produced, consumed and what had the potential to be increased in order to match up what was grown in the region to what was consumed.

From that research the project has developed a trusted local label, worked to target larger scale markets, provided support to farmers in transition, increased awareness about local foods through public education, worked to expand direct marketing channels and aligned tourism with

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agriculture. Mr. Jackson said the work of the project benefits all segments of society. He ended by encouraging the Council to start by gathering baseline information. Mr. Jackson said what they have is available on the web and can be adapted. He also provided all Council members a copy of the Local Food Guide publication. (Exhibit 5)

GAP Certification – A Farmer’s Perspective—

Joe Martin, owner of Zydeco Farm and New River Organic Growers

Mr. Martin explained he has a certified national organic program. He stated that GAP is geared to each commodity, so he figured if he grows fifteen different crops; a rough estimate of certification cost would be about \$12,000. He urged the Council to institute a pilot program on whole farm GAP safety certification, stating North Carolina would be among the cutting edge of national leaders in this area.

Potential “Whole Farm” GAP Certification and Institutional Markets—

Dr. Ben Chapman, Assistant Professor, Food Safety Extension Specialist, NCSU

Dr. Chapman addressed the potential for “whole farm” GAP Certification for fresh produce grown in North Carolina in his presentation. (Exhibit 6) He reviewed how GAP Certification for fresh produce came into being. He said that even though food safety issues have been around for a while, addressing the issues of food safety of fresh produce has only been in the last fifteen years.

Dr. Chapman said that current US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) GAP Certification is based on eight principles that focus on four areas, called the ‘4 Ws’: water quality, wildlife, workers, and waste. These four factors are the areas where the highest level of risk is found. He stated that GAP Certification is about risk reduction since cooking is the only way to eliminate risk.

As a part of Dr. Chapman’s program, Diane Ducharme presented comments regarding existing GAP programs. GAP Certification is currently commodity specific, meaning to be GAP Certified, a producer would have to have a separate certification for each commodity produced throughout the year. She said GAP Certification is buyer driven.

At the conclusion of the GAPs presentation, Commissioner Troxler directed Mr. Jim Cummings to work with a representative of each of the Subcommittees, inspectors, NCSU, NCA&T and buyers to move forward to establish a “whole farm” GAP Certification program that would address both regulatory and industry concerns. Commissioner Troxler asked the working group to come back with something specific.

REGIONAL LOCAL FOOD COUNCIL INPUT

Southeastern North Carolina Food Systems (SENCFS) Project—

Dr. Leslie Hossfeld, Associate Professor, Public Sociology Program Director, UNCW

Dr. Hossfeld gave a presentation on the Southeastern North Carolina Food Systems (SENCFS) Project (Exhibit 7), including recommendations regarding the state’s Farm to School program and GAP Certification. She gave Council members two handouts: *SENCFS Program Major Initiatives* (Exhibit 8) and a *Save the Date!* announcement for the *SENCFS Program Regional Conference*. (Exhibit 9)

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She said SENCFS came from the Jobs for the Future Program and included an eight county region. She said they started with community food assessments with buyers, farmers, direct marketing companies and the Farm to School program.

She highlighted some recognized critical needs as:

1. Farm to School Program—making it easier, affecting federal and state policy positively, improving knowledge of child nutrition and the possibility of a farmers tax break
2. GAP Certification—looking to hire a GAP auditor

Commissioner Troxler said it is the charge of the Council to advise the Legislature, the Governor and him. He encouraged the Council to be prepared for the next legislative session. Commissioner Troxler suggested Mr. Randall Patterson participate in the GAP Certification working group. Mr. McReynolds and Dr. Harvey also expressed interest in taking part in the working group.

OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Troxler reminded Council members of the following events:

- The next meeting is scheduled for September 9, 2010 in Asheville from 1:00pm to 4:00pm with brief reception after meeting.
- The 6th Annual Food Safety Forum is scheduled for August 10, 2010 at the State Fair Grounds in the Expo building. Ms. Hamrick and Dr. Chapmen are part of the program.

Ms. Earline Middleton said the Food Bank is working on a grant with USDA Hunger in America. She asked for the Council's recommendation. Time line: due August 16th. Ms. Joy Hicks said that NCDA&CS legal counsel will need to look into whether this is a valid function of the Council. She asked Ms. Middleton to send her request to Mr. Cummings.

Mr. Ager invited Council members to his farm for dinner either Wednesday night on September 8 or Thursday night on September 9.

Mr. Hall said some members must give up a day's income to attend Council meetings. He recommended combining meetings when possible.

Dr. Creamer announced the launch of the 10% Campaign. (Exhibit 10)

Mr. Hall made a motion to close the meeting. The motion was seconded by Dr. Harvey and carried unanimously. The meeting ended at 4:23pm.

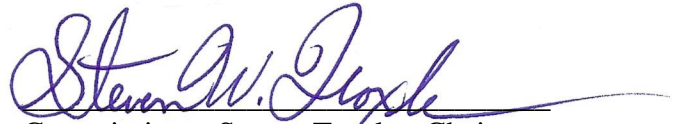
Additional documents provided:

- April 22, 2010 Draft Minutes (Exhibit 11)
- Session Law 2009-530 (Exhibit 12)
- Subcommittee Guidelines (Exhibit 13)
- Subcommittee Member List (Exhibit 14)
- Reimbursement of Travel & Other Expenses Incurred (Exhibit 15)
- Council Contact List (Exhibit 16)

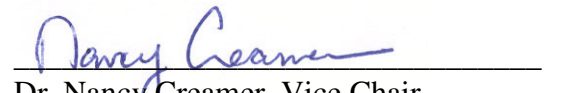
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Prepared by:
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Adopted by the Council this 9 day
of September, 2010



Commissioner Steven Troxler, Chair
Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council



Dr. Nancy Creamer, Vice Chair
Sustainable Local Food Advisory Council